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Buffalo Kwanzaa Committee

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Hi Sharm,—

Here's the play I did
w/ your idea. Not bad
for a "quickie" (HA-HA).—

I've made a few changes
in it already,— all of
which are not shown here.

Also,— not every stage
direction is give—

Isn't there a meeting tonight
at the store to ~~plan~~ for the
Kwanzaa celebration? I think
I was invited (?????) —

Fill me in when you have
time — Thanks K.

"JINAKI'S FIRST KWANZAA"

BY KARIMA AMIN

JINAKI- young girl, age 12-13
MOM and DAD- Jinaki's parents
AKUA- a young woman with knowledge of her "roots"
GROUP- people at the Karamu (the Kwanzaa feast)

TIME- it is Christmas Eve
SETTING- the living room in Jinaki's home

Scene 1

JINAKI: (Enters, coming in from outdoors. She is humming or singing "Jingle Bells" loudly. She removes her outer wear, takes a seat and starts reading a magazine.)

MOM, DAD: (They also come in from outdoors, carrying grocery bags. They also remove outer wear as JINAKI speaks.)

JINAKI: Oh hi, Momma, Daddy. I didn't expect you so early.

MOM: Hi, Baby. Your father and I decided to close the shop a little earlier today so that we could complete our preparations for the holidays.

DAD: Hello, Sweetheart. There's so much to do and so little time. Where'd you go after school today?

JINAKI: Val and I went to the library then we went to her house for hot chocolate. Oh, Momma, you should see their tree! It's beautiful! It's a live one...really big...with all kinds of fancy ornaments and stuff!!! Daddy, are we gonna go out and get our tree tonight?

MOM, DAD: (They look at each other. MOM gives DAD an "I-told-you-so" look.)

MOM: Jinaki, your father and I have been telling you for weeks now that we aren't going to celebrate Christmas this year. Why are you finding it so hard to deal with that reality? We will not have a tree this year. There'll be no red 'n' white suits or "Ho-ho-hoing" and no more spending a fortune on gifts that have no real value beyond the cost. We love you Jinaki and we know that this is a very special time of year for you but--

JINAKI: (interrupting) But we've always celebrated Christmas! I don't want to celebrate Kwa...Kwa...

DAD: It's called Kwanzaa, Honey. It's an Afrikan holiday with special meaning for us...black people...Afrikan-American people.

JINAKI: No Daddy!!! I ain't no Afrikan! I ain't no Afrikan!! I want a big, green tree and presents piled high, and--

MOM: Stop it, Jinaki!! We are going to celebrate Kwanzaa this year and that's that!

DAD: Your mother and I have decided that we want to join the thousands of black people in this country who have been celebrating Kwanzaa since 1966. It's our holiday, Baby, and we want you to be proud. We've been telling you all your life that your name, Jinaki, is a West-Afrikan name that means "proud of oneself." We want you to be proud of yourself and proud of your Afrikan heritage. It's beautiful to be black but your blackness implies certain responsibilities, not only to yourself but to your family and the community. Kwanzaa is a celebration that reminds us of our duties.

JINAKI: I don't want it!!! I don't want it!!! I hate Kwanzaa and I hate you!!! (She rushes from the room crying.)

MOM: JINAKI!!!

DAD: Let her go. She'll be all right. When Akua comes tonight to help us set the Kwanzaa table, maybe she'll understand a little better what we're trying to do. She respects Akua.

MOM: I sure hope so. What time will Akua get off from work today?

DAD: The Afrikan Cultural Center closes at 5:00 today so she should get here around 5:30.

MOM, DAD: (They leave the set.)

Scene 11

JINAKI enters and puts on a record. It's the Jacksons singing "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." She sadly sings along with the record for a moment.

AKUA: (Calling from offstage.) Hell-o-o-o! Is anyone here?

JINAKI: (Turning off the record.) I'm in here, Akua.

AKUA: *^{is} ^{akua} ^{ing} ^a ^{carry} ^{bag} (Cheerfully) Hello, Sister. (Noticing Jinaki's dejected mood) What the matter with you, Jinaki? Lose your best friend?

JINAKI: Oh, Akua-- you just won't believe what's happening around here. Momma and Daddy have gone crazy! They don't believe in Christmas anymore!

AKUA: (interested) Really..?

JINAKI: I'm not kiddin'! No tree, no gifts, no nothin'!!!

AKUA: Come on, Jinaki. It can't be all that bad.

JINAKI: But it is, Akua. They want us to celebrate some Afrikan mess,-- Kwa...Kwa...

AKUA: Kwanzaa.

JINAKI: (surprised) Yeh, Kwanzaa. You know about it?

AKUA: Sure, Sister. Been celebratin' it for years.

JINAKI: (amazed) You have!!???

AKUA: That's right. I certainly have and it has more meaning for me now than Christmas ever did.

JINAKI: But...

AKUA: Now, I'm not knockin' Christmas. It can be beautiful if it's celebrated with the proper spirit. But for me, Kwanzaa has more personal meaning because it relates directly to my blackness, my history, and my deepest beliefs.

JINAKI: (Shaking her head, still not convinced.) But I ain't no Afrikan, Akua. I don't need no Afrikan holiday.

AKUA: Jinaki, you surprise me. Have you forgotten our pledge already? Remember the one you learned this summer at the Center?

"We are an Afrikan people.
Afrikan people must work together
to liberate ourselves,
to build an independent nation,
and to create a new and better world."

We are Afrikan people, Jinaki. We live here in America but our color is Afrikan; our culture is Afrikan; our ancestors came from Afrika.

JINAKI: Akua, I know all that but--

AKUA: (interrupting) Where're your parents, Jinaki?

JINAKI: (reluctantly) I'll go get them. (She leaves and re-enters, walking slowly behind MOM and DAD. She takes a seat apart from the others.)

MOM, DAD: MOM carries the kinara with candles. DAD carries a straw mat.)

AKUA: Jambo.

MOM, DAD: (in unison) Sijambo.

AKUA: Habari gani?

MOM, DAD: Njema.

AKUA: Very good Swahili, folks. Go ahead with yo' bad Afrikan selves! (She laughs.)

MOM: Thanks for coming, Akua. This Kwanzaa business is so new to us and we certainly don't want to make any mistakes.

I hope you have time to explain everything, Akua. Some of us still want a Christmas tree around here. (He looks at Jinaki who ignores him.)

- AKUA: OK, folks. First, a little background. Kwanzaa is a celebration with Afrikan roots that was created by Dr. Maulana Ron Karenga. It is observed for seven days from December 26 through January 1. It includes lighting candles in the kinara daily, fasting, sharing the eating of fresh fruits and vegetables, and drinking from the unity cup.
- MOM: OK, what do we do first?
- AKUA: First we'll set the Kwanzaa table.
- DAD: Here's the straw mat. Mkeka, right?
- AKUA: (Places it on the table.) That's right. This is the mkeka and it symbolizes tradition as the foundation on which all else rests.
- MOM: Here's the kinara.
- AKUA: (Places it on the table.) Asante. Thank you, Sister. The kinara is the candle holder and the candles are mshumaa. Seven candles represent the seven days of Kwanzaa and the seven principles of the Nguzo Saba.
- DAD: N-gu-zo what??
- AKUA: The Nguzo Saba,-- a black value system.
- JINAKI: (Becoming interested, she moves closer to the others.)
- AKUA: Your daughter's group learned about the principles of the Nguzo Saba this summer at the Afrikan Cultural Center's black history workshop. Jinaki, do you remember them?
- JINAKI: (Slowly at first...then speaking faster)
The first is UMOJA. It means UNITY.
The second is KUJICHAGULIA. It means self-determination.
The third is UJIMA...collective work and responsibility.
UJAMAA is the fourth. It means familyhood.
NIA is purpose. KUUMBA is creativity. IMANI is faith.
(She looks proud.)
- MOM, DAD: (Look at each other and smile.)
- AKUA: Very good, Jinaki. Every evening a candle is lit and the principle for that day is discussed. When one is greeted with "Habari gani?" during Kwanzaa, which means "What's happenin'?" the reply is the principle for that day. For example on December 30, the fifth day, when one is greeted with "Habari gani?" the answer is "NIA", the fifth principle.
- MOM: (Pointing to candles.) Do these colors have a special meaning?
- AKUA: They certainly do. Red stands for--

JINAKI: (interrupting) Red stands for the blood of our people. Black stands for the race of our people. Green stands for the land of our people.

DAD: Jinaki, there's a lot you can teach us during Kwanzaa.

JINAKI: (smiles)

AKUA: (Taking corn and cup from her bag.) This is muhindi,--an ear of corn. There should be one to represent each child in the home. This is the kikombe,--the unity cup. It represents the unity of all Afrikan people. *(She places both on the table)*

MOM: Can you come over again to help us plan for the Karamu?

JINAKI: What's that?

AKUA: The Karamu is a feast. It is held on December 31 and consists of food, non-alcoholic drink, music, dance, folk tales, conversation, games and ceremony.

JINAKI: It sounds like fun.

AKUA: Sister, you ain't seen nothin' yet!

Scene 111

The Karamu. Afrikan music is playing, people are eating, drinking, dancing, conversing. Some are wearing Afrikan garments. DAD calls for everyone's attention. MOM and JINAKI stand at the Kwanzaa table with him.

DAD: Sisters! Brothers! Can I have your attention?

GROUP: (Sits on the floor around the Kwanzaa table. A basket of fruit and Afrikan statues have been added to the table setting. *also, a few gift-wrapped items*)

DAD: We are ready to begin the ceremony. We are pleased that you could join us this evening for our family's first Kwanzaa celebration. Kwanzaa is a time when black people come together to:

acknowledge the good we have done this year,
celebrate the Afrikan heritage,
reinforce the Nguzo Saba
and plan for the future.

We will now light the candles.

MOM: (Lights candle #1, the black one in the center)

GROUP: UMOJA!!!

MOM: (Lights candles #2-#7)

GROUP: KUJICHAGULIA! UJIMA! UJAMAA! NIA! KUUMBA! IMANI!!!

JINAKI:

The seventh candle is for faith. We must believe with all our heart in our parents, teachers, leaders, ^{and} people and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

DAD:

Let us now pass the kikombe,--the unity cup. (He recites the pledge slowly while the cup is being passed)

"We are an Afrikan people.
Afrikan people must work together
to liberate ourselves,
to build an independent nation,
and to create a new and better world."

GROUP:

(Shouts) HARAMBEE!! (seven times)

MOM:

This is our ^{family's} first Kwanzaa. The first of many, we hope. The change from Christmas to Kwanzaa has not been easy, especially for our daughter Jinaki, but she has taught us much about our history and heritage during this celebration. In Swahili, zawadi means gifts. During ~~THIS~~ Kwanzaa, gifts are especially for the children and they are given in recognition of what the child has ~~XXXX~~ achieved during the year. We are proud of Jinaki and we hope that she will enjoy this book of Afrikan folktales and learn much from it about herself and her people.

JINAKI:

(Hugs Mom.) Asante sana. This has been the best holiday of all!!

GROUP:

(The music begins and the party resumes.)

THE END

AFRICAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER'S

PAUL ROBESON THEATRE

presents

"JINAKI'S FIRST KWANZAA"

WRITTEN and DIRECTED by **KARIMA AMIN**



Dec. 16th Deaconess Hospital 2:00 P.M.

Dec. 18, 19, 20th African Cultural Center 10:00 and 12:00

Dec. 22th and 28th 7:00

**Dec. 21 Dr. Martin Luther King Multicultural
Institute**

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UMOJA (Unity)



THE LANGSTON HUGHES CENTER

December 26, 1983

THE NGUZO SABA

(Seven Principles of Blackness)

Dec. 26 UMOJA (Unity)
Dec. 27 KUJICHAGULIA (Self-Determination)
Dec. 28 UJIMA (Collective Work and Responsibility)
Dec. 29 UJAMAA (Cooperative Economics)
Dec. 30 NIA (Purpose)
Dec. 31 KUUMBA (Creativity)
Jan. 1 IMANI (Faith)

HAPPY KWANZAA!

KWANZAA YENU IWE NA HERI

PROGRAM

PROCESSION CARRYING KWANZAA SYMBOLS

WELCOME ADDRESS - Kenneth Holley

EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS - Phyllis Murray

LIGHTING OF CANDLES & LIBATION - Kenneth Holley

INTRODUCTION OF GUEST SPEAKER - Akua Kamau

GUEST SPEAKER - Mzee Jesse Nash, Sr.

CULTURAL EXPRESSION:

BUFFALO INNER CITY BALLET - Youth Dancers

POETRY READINGS - Sule Kamau, Mzee Kamau
Phyllis Murray, Akua Kamau

MASTER DRUMMER - Brother Emile Latimer & Friends

(Program for Dec. 27 is located at the Center
for Positive Thought, 11 East Utica Street)



Kwanzaa Committee of Buffalo

November 15, 1983

Dear Friend:

The Kwanzaa Committee of Buffalo is working and planning for the community-wide Kwanzaa celebration which will be held December 26 - January 1, at various locations within the inner-city community. This committee exists to coordinate the activities of Kwanzaa and to disseminate correct information about this National Afrikan-American Holiday created by Maulana Karenga. The theme this year will be "CELEBRATING OUR VALUES."

This year the Kwanzaa Committee of Buffalo is putting together a Souvenir Program Journal that will include information on Kwanzaa, location for the seven-day celebration, and photos. Your contribution will help to defer expenses for the Karamu (feast) on January 1 and publicity.

To ensure that this celebration is a reality we ask that those who are able to contribute find it within their hearts to do so. Please help support the only national holiday that we as Afrikan-Americans can say is truly our own and part of our ancestral Afrikan heritage. Let us celebrate our values together.

Payment should be received by FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2. Please make all checks payable to: Kwanzaa Committee of Buffalo
c/o Harambee Books and Crafts
1377 Main Street, Suite 3
Buffalo, New York 14209

In unity,

Sharon Holley, Chairperson
Chris Milhouse, Publicity

KWANZAA SOUVENIR PROGRAM JOURNAL - CELEBRATING OUR VALUES

Name/Business

Carol Miller + Maria Rosa

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Individual and Family Listing (\$5.00 - \$10.00)

Business and/or Organization: 1/4 page (\$20)

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5 1/2x8 1/2 page (\$50 - \$100)